

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Secretary-General, attending signing ceremony of Peace Agreement on El Salvador, says United Nations involvement in peace efforts in that country has been "a ground-breaking experience"; travels to San Salvador to visit ONUSAL headquarters before returning to New York tomorrow.
- ◆ Security Council dissolves United Nations Observer Group (ONUSA) in Central America and transfers staff and equipment to Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).
- ◆ Secretary-General welcomes payment in full by 12 Member States to United Nations 1992 regular budget and urges other Member States to do the same by 31 January; Organization still owed over \$816 million in unpaid assessments for previous years.
- ◆ In second meeting today, Security Council refers Kazakhstan's application for United Nations membership to Committee on Admission of New Members for examination and report.
- ◆ Iran has made "important progress" in economic and social reconstruction after eight-year war with Iraq; however, barriers remain for recovery, according to report by former Secretary-General.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali attended today in Mexico City the signing ceremony of the Peace Agreements on El Salvador.

In a speech delivered at the ceremony, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said the Agreements were "the crowning achievement of a long and arduous journey" and that the United Nations involvement had been "a ground-breaking experience".

Although the armed conflict in El Salvador had had international dimensions, it had been primarily an internal conflict, and thus not the kind of issue in which the United Nations would normally be involved, he said. However, he added, at the request of the Salvadorian authorities, and with the backing of the international community, the Organization, and the

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Secretary-General in particular, had been induced into playing an innovative role in the resolution of the conflict. The monitoring of human rights issue by ONUSAL was a good example of this new role.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also noted that the broadened responsibilities of ONUSAL, as recently approved by the Security Council, were an ambitious step by the international community to back the efforts of the Salvadorian people to break the cycle of poverty and violence and to stride toward development, democracy and peace.

Following the signing ceremony, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali was scheduled to travel to the capital city of San Salvador to visit ONUSAL headquarters in El Salvador before returning to New York tomorrow.

Earlier today, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the President of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, for a discussion of a variety of regional issues, as well as the role of Mexico in the United Nations. The meeting was attended by Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding and the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Central America, Alvaro de Soto.

Later in the afternoon, the Secretary-General was scheduled to meet with United States Secretary of State James A. Baker and with the Heads of State and Government of the four countries known as "friends of the Secretary-General" -- Colombia, Venezuela, Spain and Mexico -- also present at the signing ceremony.

Last night, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the Prime Minister of Spain, Felipe Gonzalez, with whom he discussed the role of Spain in ONUSAL and Spain's strong and sustained support for United Nations peace-keeping operations. The Secretary-General also received the delegation of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN).

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The Security Council decided today to terminate the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), effective 17 January.

The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 730 (1992) by which it also approved the Secretary-General's report on the matter. According to the report, this action was necessary to enable the transfer of certain personnel and equipment from ONUCA to the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and to complete their deployment to El Salvador by 1 February.

ONUCA, which was the first large-scale peace-keeping operation of the United Nations in the Americas, was established in March 1989 at the request of the Governments of the five Central American Governments -- Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua -- to verify the Esquipulas II agreement for "firm and lasting peace in Central America".

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Over the course of its deployment, ONUCA helped in the process of transition following the Nicaraguan elections in February 1990, including the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance and the monitoring of the cease-fire in that country. The termination of the force coincides with the signing of the peace agreement today in Mexico City, putting an end to the 12-year conflict in El Salvador in which an estimated 70,000 people lost their lives.

The Secretary-General today welcomed the full payment, as of 15 January, by twelve Member States of their assessed contributions for the United Nations Working Capital Fund and the 1992 regular budget.

In a statement made through Spokesman François Giuliani, the Secretary-General emphasized that the United Nations is still owed over \$816 million by Member States in unpaid assessments for the regular budget and for peace-keeping operations for last year and all previous years.

The Spokesman told correspondents that the assessments for the 1992 regular budget, totalling over \$1 billion, were payable in full by 31 January, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations. As of yesterday, twelve Member States - Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Kuwait, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden - had already fully paid their contributions. In addition, two new Member States - Estonia and Lithuania - had contributed \$5,000 each to the 1992 regular budget, pending a determination by the General Assembly of their rates of assessments.

A list of the Member States who have complied with their financial obligations to pay their assessments in full by 31 January will be issued on 3 February.

In a second meeting this morning, the Security Council referred the application of the Republic of Kazakhstan, member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union), for membership in the United Nations to the Committee on the Admission of New Members for examination and report.

The Committee will meet on Tuesday, 21 January, to examine the application and prepare its report to the Council. The Council will meet again at a time to be announced to consider and take a decision on the Committee's report.

Iranian authorities have made "important progress" in reconstructing their country economically and socially after eight years of devastating war with Iraq. However, according to a report by former Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, three main barriers are holding up the successful

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Press Release DH/1059
16 January 1992

implementation of the reconstruction process of Iran: the shortage of foreign exchange, shortage of skilled professional and technical cadres, and transportation bottlenecks.

In his report to the Security Council, dated 24 December 1991, the Secretary-General said Iran's domestic reconstruction efforts since the end of the war three years ago had been "substantial and impressive". At the same time, however, the report noted that the immediate post-war strategy of rapid recovery of output appeared to be nearing its limits. There was a need to adopt a more thorough approach to the improvement of the physical infrastructure and productive apparatus. Crucial to such a change in strategy, it said, was an increase in foreign exchange resources.

The report concluded that the international community could make an important contribution to accelerating the progress in reconstructing Iran. The country's low indebtedness profile would make it particularly creditworthy for the project financing it seeks, and there appeared to be a wide range of viable projects both in the public and private sectors, the report said.

The Secretary-General's report was based on a final study by a team of experts, led by former Under-Secretary-General Abdulrahim A. Farah, who visited Iran from 7 November to 1 December 1991.
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